

LIBERIA'S PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTIONS**HON. JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2011

Mr. JACKSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Liberia on the completion of its second peaceful and democratic election. On November 15th, Liberia's National Elections Commission certified President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of the Unity Party as the President of the Republic of Liberia. The November 15 declaration followed a Presidential run-off election on November 8, which was required by the Liberian Constitution as no candidate received a majority of votes in the first round held on October 11.

I was encouraged by reports that the Liberian election process was deemed free, fair and transparent by some 4,800 domestic and international observers. The role that the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS, the Carter Center and other institutions played was crucial in providing additional confidence in the process. I applaud the UN Mission in Liberia for providing a safe and secure environment in which voters were able to cast their ballots without incident on both October 11 and November 8. Furthermore, I applaud the Liberian people on demonstrating their commitment to peace and democracy.

I congratulate President Johnson Sirleaf and the newly elected members of the National Legislature, and I hope that they will work together to continue along the path to progress, peace, and prosperity that Liberia has already taken. At the same time, I express my deep regret over the decision of the Congress for Democratic Change, CDC, to boycott the run-off election based upon unproven allegations that the election process was fraudulent. I concur in the sentiments expressed by ECOWAS, the AU and the Carter Center that the CDC boycott deprived the people of Liberia of a dynamic vote in the runoff and created a climate of intimidation and fear in the country.

I was saddened by the violent protest that erupted on November 7, the eve of Liberia's runoff election, and I mourn the lives lost on that day, which will remain a shadow cast over an otherwise peaceful and democratic process. I'm pleased by President Johnson Sirleaf's efforts to set up an independent commission to investigate the incident and bring those responsible to justice. I firmly believe that reconciliation is essential to create a sense of national unity and purpose, and I call upon all political party leaders and their supporters to recognize the certified results of the Presidential and Legislative contests.

The United States will hold accountable any and all political leaders and their supporters seeking to undermine Liberia's peace and democracy by all means available, including the possible use of multilateral and bilateral sanctions.

It is now more important than ever that the United States continue to work with Liberia's elected leaders and stand by the Liberian people as they move to complete their journey into post-conflict success, and sustain the path

toward social stability and economic prosperity.

TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF MR.
BENJAMIN HICKMANN WRIGHT SR.**HON. DONALD M. PAYNE**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2011

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of Mr. Benjamin Hickman Wright, Senior who passed away on April 12, 2011. His beloved family is holding a memorial service on November 23, 2011. Throughout his lifetime, Mr. Wright exemplified the highest traits of fidelity to his country and family in a manner truly deserving of this great honor. Mr. Wright was an individual who came from a lineage that strove for excellence in all facets of their work. Over a lifetime of achievement and service to others, Mr. Wright embodied the ideals of hard work and dedication to his community, which is the bedrock of American values.

Mr. Wright was an individual who realized significant achievements throughout his life. This can be traced back to his family who attained advanced degrees in the early twentieth century. In fact Mr. Wright's grandfather and great uncle were the first African American physicians in Ohio. Mr. Wright's father was a top ranking life insurance salesman who also gave back to his community by teaching sharecroppers how to read, write and calculate the price of their produce and goods. After receiving a stellar education, Mr. Wright served in the armed forces during World War II in the European Theater as a First Class Petty Officer of the United States Navy. He was recently honored for his service with an Armed Forces Citation signed by President Obama.

From one generation to the next, it is evident that the Wright family has attained significant accomplishments and remained committed to excellence in their work. Mr. Wright maintained and advanced this work through his many accomplishments including his service in the military followed by his service as an Economic Advisor in Monrovia, Liberia. Mr. Wright would go on to become a business owner and an employee in several fortune 500 companies. By the 1980's he founded a nationwide coalition of civic and fraternal associations that served to empower and up lift others.

His commitment to serving his community and country and his accomplishments benefited and enhanced the lives of many citizens over several decades. His memory and work will be remembered by a grateful nation and I am pleased to add my voice as his family celebrates his legacy.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF RIALTO'S
CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**HON. JOE BACA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2011

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask Congress to join me in celebrating the City of

Rialto's 100th Birthday. Rialto has a long, rich history, and has grown into a city that is home to over 100,000 people. I have been fortunate enough to raise my family in Rialto. I am proud to live in this city, represent these people, and join them in celebrating this momentous event.

Ancient artifacts and traces of a village indicate that Native Americans inhabited this area between 1500 AD and 1800 AD. What happened to these people and settlements still remains a mystery. In 1769, the King of Spain awarded areas of Rialto as land grants to Spanish Dons. Following the cession of California to the United States, Mormons became the next wave of settlers in the San Bernardino valley. By 1854 some of these early pioneers settled in Rialto, constructing ranches and farms in their wake. This period gave birth to the international distribution of Muscat Grapes and the building of the oldest structure in Rialto.

The Semi Tropic Land and Water Company purchased 25,000 acres of land in 1887. The company helped develop and christen the town site. Hattie Merrill, daughter of the former Governor of Iowa, Samuel Merrill, named the town site after the Rialto Bridge in Venice, Italy. Within the same year, a railroad connector line was constructed in Rialto. Towns were located every 2,600 yards along the line, connecting Rialto to towns from San Bernardino to Pasadena. That year alone over 25 new towns were built. During the same year, a group of Methodists settled in Rialto. They originally came to build a college, but soon began to grow citrus in the beautiful climate of Rialto. Their farms quickly expanded to acres of citrus groves. In 1888, the Brooke School was built to educate the growing population. Many credit this group of Methodists for developing the Town of Rialto.

By the late 1800s, Rialto became home to a blacksmith, lumber yard, and a cement pipe manufacturing company. The first citrus association was established, and the first citrus packing house was built. Rialto's reputation for beautiful homes with shaded drives began to grow, and so did the population. In 1891, the Rialto School District was formed, and in 1907 the Chamber of Commerce was established. Over the next four years, the population grew to the point that the town supported 40 businesses and a newspaper. In 1911, Rialto was officially incorporated as a City.

For many years thereafter, the City of Rialto continued to grow, shipping citrus to every area in the country. Today those train tracks still run through the City, but are used on a much smaller scale—the area has matured and modernized. Throughout these changes, Rialto remains a great place to raise a family. My children grew up attending school and playing sports in the area. I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve this community both at the local and national level. My son, Joe Baca, Jr. still lives in Rialto and has the opportunity to serve our community as a City Council Member. On behalf of my wife, Barbara, and my children, Councilman Joe Baca Jr., Jeremy, Natalie, and Jennifer, we would like to join our neighbors in celebrating Rialto's 100th birthday.